

563 388 2328 P.01/01
Vice President
Senior Financial Advisor
Private Client Group



4412 N. Brady St.
Davenport, IA 52806
563-388-2355
800-937-0612
john_pedersen@ml.com

January 24, 2002

Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Atty. Gen. Ashcroft,

I wanted to express my opinion on the recent settlement of the antitrust lawsuit between Microsoft and the federal government, since the public comment period is still in effect. It is good to see that, after three long years of costly litigation, this case is finally over. I would hope that you will persist in doing what you can to make sure that the current settlement stays as is, and that no more taxpayer dollars are squandered on further litigation.

I have long felt that this case has been more about helping Microsoft's competitors instead of helping consumers. When they couldn't compete effectively in the marketplace, they turned to the government for help. In most cases, it wasn't Microsoft's strength in the market, but simply better software. A good example today is the litigation launched by AOL Time Warner claiming that due to Microsoft's power, they rolled over the Netscape browser costing them significant market share. I was a previous user of Netscape, but switched to MS Explorer simply because it was a better product.

As I understand, there will be an oversight committee to make sure that Microsoft complies with all of the terms of the settlement. This should ensure that consumers get better choices, and competitors have better access to information on product development. The end result of this will be a boost in the technology industry. In turn, this will benefit all sectors of the American economy, which have come to rely on the technology field as an economic leader. It makes no sense to continue attacking the leading company in such a vital industry. To do so does not serve the economy or the thousands of shareholders who have invested money in the company.

There is no reason to alter the settlement or disallow it all together, and I hope that we will see this whole issue come to an end as soon as possible so that all parties involved can move on to more important matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John E. Pedersen".

John E. Pedersen
Vice President
Senior Financial Advisor

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